

Senate Move to Probe CIA

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 20.—A hitherto unpublicized move within the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency promises to precipitate an explosive dispute with President Johnson.

Such an investigation of an agency that lives in the never-never land of spies and mysterious coups d'état would be one of the most sensitive ever undertaken by Congress.

All moves so far have been made behind the scenes.

Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) already has placed on the committee's tentative agenda for this year a study of the CIA's impact on foreign policy, it was learned. This was discussed at a closed door meeting of the committee last week.

CIA Director William F. Raburn has been advised informally of what is afoot by Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy (D-Minn.), a committee member and for years a prime advocate of closer congressional supervision of the agency's activities.

Little more than a handful in Congress are informed about the CIA in any detail. It employs thousands in Washington and around the world and the hundreds of millions it spends annually are hidden in appropriations for other government departments.

Its operations have run the gamut from the routine monitoring of foreign propaganda radio broadcasts to clandestine efforts to overthrow governments.

OPPOSITION EXPECTED

Sen. George D. Aiken of Vermont, the second-ranked Republican on the committee, foresees "massive resistance" to its proposed inquiry from the President and others in the executive branch.

"The confrontation with the executive branch would be quite explosive" if the issue is pressed," Sen. Aiken said.

He believes the CIA "doesn't get much supervision" from Congress now and thinks the vast intelligence apparatus

should be watched more closely from Capitol Hill. But he says he doesn't know how he will vote on authorizing the investigation.

"We talked about this in the committee last week," Sen. Aiken said. "I'm in a conflict on this one. I think the agency should have closer supervision, but I'm afraid of leaks in such an investigation that might prove embarrassing to our government."

Sen. McCarthy soon will make the first open move when he places before the Senate a resolution authorizing the Foreign Relations Committee to investigate the CIA.

SOME SUPPORT

Sen. McCarthy already appears to have the strong support of Sen. Fulbright, Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.), and others on the 19-member committee. Some informed sources believe that a majority could withstand White House pressures and vote for the inquiry.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana, who is in a unique and somewhat uncomfortable spot on this issue, may be a critical factor if it ever comes to a floor test.

Sen. Mansfield went on record long ago in favor of closer congressional supervision of the CIA and he is the No. 3 Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee. But he also is Majority Leader, and as such is expected to protect the Administration's interests in the Senate.

Sen. Mansfield was not Majority Leader 10 years ago when he led the unsuccessful fight in the Senate to establish a joint congressional committee to oversee the CIA.

Now, publicly at least, Sen. Mansfield is playing it close to the vest.

Confirming that the investigation was discussed by the committee last week, Sen. Mansfield said that he has tried to "keep hands off this issue since becoming Majority Leader."

For a decade or more, Presidents have been able to thwart those who feel Congress has done a dangerously inadequate job of auditing the CIA—more so with respect to policy than the agency's finances.

Only once, in fact, have the proponents succeeded in forcing a vote. That was in 1956 on the Mansfield resolution for creating a joint watchdog committee. Sen. Mansfield lost, 59 to 27.

Voting against Sen. Mansfield was Lyndon B. Johnson, then the Senate Democratic leader. Voting for the joint committee was the late John F. Kennedy, then the Junior Senator from Massachusetts.

JFK CHANGED MIND

Mr. Kennedy, however, changed his mind when he became President.

"I am well satisfied with the present arrangements," he said in 1963.

The present arrangement involves special CIA subcommittees of the armed services and appropriations committees in both the House and Senate.

Presidents, jealous of their power over the CIA, and many on Capitol Hill have felt that those subcommittees adequately fulfill the congressional responsibility for overseeing executive agencies.

Sen. McCarthy and many others, however, argue that the present system is cursory and far too informal for overseeing such a vital part of the government.

Moreover, they feel that with the CIA's obvious involvement in foreign policy the foreign relations committees are best suited to perform the watchdog function.

The Fulbright committee's controversial investigation of this nation's intervention in the Dominican Republic revolution last Spring accounts, in part, for the increased agitation within the committee to take a second look at the CIA.

Sen. Fulbright and some other members became convinced not only that American policy failed in the Dominican Republic but that it failed because the President was misled by faulty advice and intelligence.

The committee split sharply on this question—and not along party lines. Sen. Fulbright's condemnation of the Administration's Dominican policy also led to a substantial cooling in the personal relationship between him and the President.

Now, Sen. Fulbright may be

against Mr. Johnson on the issue which has broad meaning not only for the CIA but for the Foreign Relations Committee itself.

As Sen. McCarthy put it in an interview:

"The foreign policy implications of the CIA's activities are becoming increasingly important. Foreign policy has been in a mixed no-man's land for a long time (an apparent reference to the mixture of standard diplomacy with cloak-and-dagger CIA operations) and more people now realize this.

"The committee ought to assert proper jurisdiction in those areas where foreign policy is affected, determined and executed—and the CIA is one of those areas."

The resolution Sen. McCarthy soon will introduce will authorize the Foreign Relations Committee "to make a full and complete study with respect to the effects of the operations and activities of the Central Intelligence Agency upon the foreign relations of the United States."

That resolution probably will be referred to the Foreign Relations Committee, but it is not certain that it will be brought to a vote.

With the support of a committee majority, Sen. Fulbright could go ahead with an investigation even without the resolution. But it will be available if it is decided that a formal vote is desirable.

Favorable action by the committee on the resolution would send it to the floor for a vote by the entire Senate.

There is speculation that to head off an investigation directed by Sen. Fulbright, the President might agree to some compromise—perhaps the creation of a select committee that does not include Sen. Fulbright.

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